

# LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

Confidential help is always available. Text 838255.



AUGUST 2020



## Connect to Protect: 2020 Suicide Prevention Month

While preventing suicide is year-round effort, Suicide Prevention Month is an important time to come together to highlight the ways we can connect with each other to maintain our psychological health and emotional wellness. The Defense Suicide Prevention Office's (DSPO) theme "Connect to Protect" and "1 Small ACT" are important reminders of the critical role connections to family members, friends, loved ones, peers and our greater communities can play in preventing suicide. We will use 1 Small ACT and Connect to Protect to enlist all members of the Navy community to recognize the importance of connectedness and the actionable steps we can all take to foster social connection. With 2020 Suicide Prevention Month right around the corner, here are three things you can do now to jumpstart your efforts to be there for every Sailor, every day:

**Take time to learn about connectedness.** Connection is essential during times of extreme stress. Protective factors against suicide include: a strong sense of community and belonging, psychological and physical safety, strong ties with family and friends, a fulfillment of personal purpose and a contribution or responsibility to others. Investing in your relationships with others and these protective factors prior to a stressful event occurring will help you feel more confident in exercising resilience. Make an effort to regularly express how much your loved ones mean to you as well as your respect and admiration for colleagues.

**Get social.** The 1 Small ACT Photo Gallery, hosted on the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign's Flickr page, remains open for submissions. Take a moment to reflect on the ways you will promote connectedness, check-in on your shipmates, practice self-care, start hard conversations, etc. in September and beyond. Then, snap a selfie and share your ideas. 1 Small ACT signs and submission details are available at [www.suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil) > [Every Sailor, Every Day](#) > [1 Small ACT Photo Gallery](#).

**Understand 1 Small ACT is a call-to-action.** Each of us has the power to make a difference. One small act of kindness can be lifesaving. We must remain committed to

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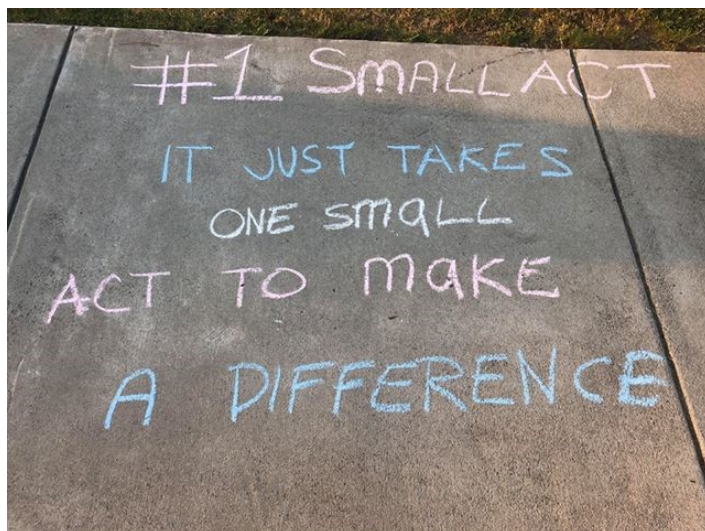
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ACT – Ask, Care, Treat. Be willing to **Ask** your shipmates the hard questions about how they're feeling and if they're okay. Show them you **Care** by actively listening without judgment and paying attention to additional warning signs, like statements about not wanting to live, feeling like a burden, feeling hopeless or discussion of lethal means. Help them get to **Treatment** immediately and escort them to a medical professional or Navy chaplain for safety. We can all take positive, preventative actions to care for our shipmates through continuous, active listening, honest communication and authentic connection.

2020 Suicide Prevention Month is the launch-pad for FY-21 Navy Suicide Prevention efforts. It's not just about a 30-day blitz. Check back throughout the year for messages, tools and resources that empower Sailors and their families to better recognize warning signs, start conversations, take the right actions to intervene and practicing ongoing safety.



*Life Counts!*  
Ask Care Treat

**CULTURE OF  
EXCELLENCE**

## LIFELINK SPOTLIGHT

Sailors who checked “yes” received a phone call from SPRINT personnel. In the end, SPRINT found that despite the hardships and anxiety of the unknown, the crew was remarkably resilient.

## PLAN OF THE WEEK NOTES

1. Due to stay-at-home orders or travel restrictions, we may be experiencing increased stress in our personal relationships. Military OneSource offers virtual counseling options and tools to support military couples through the pandemic and beyond. Learn more at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/family-life/covid-19-resources/digital-resources-for-military-relationships?redirect=%2Ffamily-relationships%2Ffamily-life%2Fcovid-19-resources>.
2. In the summertime, many different (and delicious) fruits and vegetables are in season. Several fruits and vegetables hold water and are a great source of additional hydration when temperatures continue to rise. From strawberries to bananas to corn to carrots, adding these colorful ingredients to your plate or next dish is an easy way to help balance your diet and feel healthier. Eating nutritious options is a form of self-care. Get more tips at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2020/07/07/making-the-most-of-your-summer-meals/>.
3. Did you know that growing and nurturing your support network is one way to increase your mental immunity? Building strong social ties leads to a happier and more fulfilled life. When worries or other topics of concern come up, talk it out with a trusted friend, family member or mentor. Leaning on others when you need support does not detract from your personal strength—it helps grow it. Learn more about boosting your mental resilience at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2020/06/17/5-ideas-to-boost-your-mental-resilience/>.
4. As back-to-school season approaches and the COVID-19 pandemic continues, many parents, caregivers and guardians face the new and difficult choices about how their child will return to school in the fall, such as deciding between in-person and virtual learning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a tool designed to help parents, guardians and caregivers weigh the risks and benefits of available educational options to help them make decisions about sending their child back to school. Check out the tool at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>.

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## NEWS & RESOURCES

Groups Unite on a Mental Health and  
Suicide Prevention Response to COVID-19  
[The Action Alliance](#)

MHS Addresses Sleep in the Military  
through Sleep Studies  
[Health.mil](#)

Five Ways to Power Your Performance with  
Optimism  
[HPRC](#)

Suicide Prevention Resources for Line  
Leaders  
[Real Warriors Campaign](#)

Camp Pendleton Group Therapy Provides a  
Cornerstone for Mental Wellness  
[Health.mil](#)

Identifying Warning Signs of Suicide on  
Social Media  
[Real Warriors Campaign](#)

Postvention Toolkit  
[Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#)

Back-to-School Planning During COVID-19  
[Military OneSource](#)

How Do I Improve My Quality of Life  
[HPRC](#)

## CURRENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

**101 Critical Days of Summer**  
Memorial Day—Labor Day

**SPC Training Webinars**

Aug 20, 6PM CDT  
[Register here](#)

## FCC Designates '988' for Mental Health and Suicide Crises

*The following article was adapted from #CrisisTalk, a conversation space powered by Crisis Now. Crisis Now is led by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and developed with the Action Alliance, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the National Council for Behavioral Health and RI International.*



On 16 July 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) formally voted and approved '988' to be three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This decision allows Americans in crisis to easily connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. All telecommunication carriers will be required to be operational in 988 service by 16 July 2022. During the transition to 988, those who need help should continue to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK or text 838255). Veterans and Service Members may continue to reach the Veterans/Military Crisis Line at the same number by pressing 1 after dialing the main number.

The two-year transition period will give phone providers time to make any necessary network changes and prepare for an increase in call, chat and text volume, which experts estimate will rise from over 2.2 million callers to over 4.4 million.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the access to suicide prevention and mental health support resources is more important than ever. Crisis Text Line, a free, 24/7 crisis support line, has been tracking metrics about the mental health of those reaching out to its service during the COVID-19 pandemic. A snapshot of their data includes:

- Conversations per month that mention the word "virus" have increased 49 times
- 80% of people who mentioned "virus" reported increased anxiety (compared to 34% of texters overall who mentioned feeling anxious)
- 18-34-year-olds make up over half (52%) of those texting about the virus

In the two-year interim, we recognize the need to continue to proactively ACT and promote existing outreach and crisis resources as well as communication strategies that help foster a sense of connection, belonging and support. As we navigate the physical and mental health and wellness effects of the ongoing pandemic, it is essential to recognize the importance of actively communicating with individuals in our support networks, emphasize they are not alone and remind them asking for help is a sign of strength.

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Ask Care Treat

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